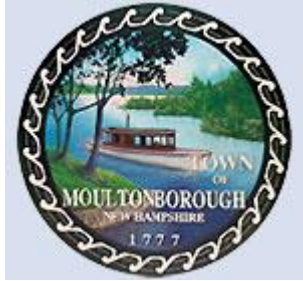


**Adele Taylor Property Use Committee
P.O. Box 139
Moultonborough, NH 03254**



**FINAL REPORT TO THE
MOULTONBOROUGH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
ADELE TAYLOR PROPERTY USE COMMITTEE
December 19th, 2013**



*Adele Taylor Property Use
Committee*

Town of Moultonborough
6 Holland Street - PO Box 139
Moultonborough, NH 03254
(603) 476-2347 * Fax (603) 476-5835

December 19th 2013

The Honorable Joel Mudgett, Chairman
Moultonborough Board of Selectmen
PO Box 139
Moultonborough, NH 03254

Dear Chairman Mudgett and Members:

Submitted herewith is our report in response to the Charge you gave us to review and assess the possible uses for 970 Whittier Highway, commonly referred to as the Adele Taylor Property.

Upon your acceptance of this report, we respectfully ask that you discharge this committee. We remain available to answer any questions you may have and will be available to discuss the report at Town Meeting should the need arise.

Thank you for this opportunity.
Sincerely yours,

Mark Borrin, Chairman
Heritage Commission Representative

Paul Punturieri, Clerk
Citizen at Large

Robert Goffredo
Planning Board Representative

Allen Hoch
Citizen at Large

Tim Woods
Citizen at Large

Joanne Farnham
Citizen at Large (Alternate)

Acknowledgments

The Adele Taylor Property Use Committee would like to acknowledge and thank the citizens, town and school departments that contributed to this final report. Finally, the Committee would like to thank Nancy Wright and Bud Heinrich for regularly videotaping the Committee meetings for distribution and viewing to the citizens of the community.

Charge and Duties

An Order Creating the Adele Taylor Property Use Committee was approved by the Board of Selectmen on October 31st, 2013:

The purposes of the order is to create an orderly process to catalog possible uses for the property located at 970 Whittier Highway commonly referred to as the Adele Taylor property. This process will be undertaken and completed by a five member committee to be known as the Adele Taylor Property Use Committee.

The Committee is to be comprised of five persons. Those persons shall be:

- 1 Member from and appointed by the Planning Board*
- 1 Member from and appointed by the Heritage Commission*
- 3 Members from the Public At Large and appointed by the Select Board*
- 1 Alternate Member from the Public At Large and appointed by the Select Board*

Alternate at-large members shall be seated to participate in any matter where a permanent member has excused himself over a matter in which he has a conflict or to provide a full complement of five members to conduct business. The minutes shall reflect any alternate member seated to act in the stead of a permanent ember and the reason therefore. A seated alternate member shall have all the rights and voting privileges of a permanent member.

d. Officers

The Select Board shall designate one of the members of the Committee as Chair at the time of formation. The Chair shall prepare an agenda, preside at meetings, and act as spokesman for the Committee when so authorized. The Committee shall elect a Clerk from amongst its members who shall give notice of all meetings, record all proceedings, act as the keeper of the records, and act as Chairman in the absence of the Chair.

5.) Powers and Duties

1.) Receive a briefing from the Select Board Chair and Town Administrator as to the reasons for its creation, the intent of the charge, the statute of RSA 91-A and the like, and the staff support which will be made available to it.

2.) *Receive a briefing from the Town Planner on the several studies and reports related to activity and land uses within the general area including, but not limited to, the Village Sidewalks Study, Safe Routes to Schools, the Master Plan, and the Village Charrette.*

3.) *Participate in a walk-over of the property.*

4.) *Conduct such firsthand interviews of staff, individuals or other parties and public hearings as it shall deem warranted.*

5.) *Deliver a report to the Select Board which:*

(a) Catalogs potential uses for the property for which it might be acquired; and

(b) The process it followed to catalog said uses.

Executive Summary

The committee was tasked with a condensed time frame to complete its charge within a very narrow focus: catalog possible uses for the property only. While the committee did tour the main building on the site and determined that there were multiple structural and environmental concerns, these were considered to be outside the scope of the committee's charge. It was determined during the course of interviews that the building itself had no specific current or planned public purpose. That being established, adaptive reuse of the building at some time in the future was left open as a possible use.

The committee also determined that a possible use for the property is for a myriad of commercial applications, but decided that it was not necessary to attempt to itemize them. It would suffice for the committee's work to simply state that the property does have potential commercial use.

The committee conducted interviews with various town departments and the school district. The committee sought and captured as much public input as possible in the limited time available at every public meeting, via email and personal interactions during the term of its work. All uses and comments were considered in formulating the committee's final report.

At the December 5th, 2013 committee meeting, an initial draft of the committee findings was reviewed and additional public input into uses was gathered. The committee then went about organizing the uses for the property along with the rationale for making those recommendations. On December 12th, 2013, the committee held a public hearing to review the final report before submission to the Board of Selectmen.

Background

The Moultonborough Board of Selectmen and the School Board were approached a number of months back by the trustees of the Adele Taylor property located at 970 Whittier Highway in Moultonborough for the sale of the property to the Town with net proceeds donated to a scholarship fund for the School District. The property is 5.09 acres and has a large single family home with barn situated in close proximity to Whittier Highway (Route 25). The land directly abuts the School District land, the Bank of New Hampshire and a property owned by Huggins Hospital. It is located in the Village Commercial Zone C (*“Commercial Zone “C” is established with the intent of maintaining the character of the Village, or Corner as sometimes known, which has, through roughly 200 years of development, maintained a consistent character in massing, setback, density and building type and design. It shall include all land within 500 feet from the center line of the road on either side of Route 25 from Blake Road to the intersection of Route 109 South.”*)

Town Administrator Carter Terenzini presented the possible Town purchase of this property to the Planning Board on [July 10th 2013](#). Mr. Terenzini asked if the board saw that the acquisition of this property has public purpose. The Planning Board recommended to the Board of Selectmen that they continue to explore the acquisition of the property located at 970 Whittier Highway as they recognize there is a potential public purpose in acquiring the real estate.

The Town Administrator met with the Capital Improvements Program Committee on July 11th 2013

The committee decided to include the parcel’s purchase on its spreadsheet of requests and consider the request along with other requests brought to the committee.

He also presented the possible purchase of this property to the Conservation Commission on [August 5th, 2013](#). The Conservation Committee decided there was no particular conservation value in this property.

The Board of Selectmen held public hearings on [September 5th, 2013](#) and [September 19th, 2013](#) to consider the property acquisition for \$240,900.

On [October 3rd, 2013](#), The Board of Selectmen approved placing the question of whether to purchase the property on the 2014 Town Warrant but would first obtain an independent appraisal of the property, an estimate of the cost to contain any environmental issues and form a committee to explore its possible uses.

The Adele Taylor Property Use Committee charge was approved and members appointed by the Board of Selectmen on [October 31st, 2013](#).

Methodology

The committee was tasked with an accelerated time frame to complete its charge. The first committee meeting was held on November 14th and a meeting schedule was agreed upon with

weekly meetings to conclude with a public hearing on December 12th 2013 to finalize the report to the Board of Selectmen.

Town Planner Bruce Woodruff briefed the committee on all the existing planning documents that speak to either the village or have a possible connection to the property and its potential uses and presented excerpts from each document to the committee. He also provided an overview of the Right to Know law.

A site visit and walk through of the property was conducted on Saturday November 16th. Interviews during posted public meetings were conducted with:

- Moultonborough Recreation Department represented by Director Donna Kuethe
- Moultonborough School District represented by Superintendent Susan Noyes
- Moultonborough Police Department represented by Chief Wetherbee
- Moultonborough Town Administrator Carter Terenzini
- Moultonborough Director of Public Works Scott Kinmond
- Moultonborough Fire Chief David Bengtson
- Property Trustee Richard Plaisted

During every meeting, public input was also sought. All ideas for possible uses were listed in random order (Attachment Four).

In addition, public comments were also captured and listed for the record (Attachment Two) Comments and property use ideas were reviewed by the committee at the December 5th 2013 meeting for purposes of cataloging all possible property uses captured.

The committee met on December 11th, 2013 to review the final draft of this report. On December 12th, 2013, the committee met for the final time to present the report to the public before submittal to the Board of Selectmen.

Interview Notes

Recreation Department

Director Donna Kuethe felt strongly that the Blue Ribbon Commission report recommendations should be followed and that the best use for the property is for a recreation/gym building. It is in close proximity to the school as the BRC report (Attachment Three) recommended.

Using the property as a park can also be a possible use, but the biggest need for her department is a need for a new building. A paper was provided to the committee (Attachment Three) outlining the history of the recreation building proposals which essentially ended with the move into the old MPD building at the Town complex in 2004.

She reminded the board that her department serves more than children and in fact serves more adults than children, but the younger crowd is more intensive. The recreation department runs a drop in program in the recreation center currently and said that there were 31 kids registered all of middle school age (5-8th grade) with an average daily attendance of 7. The lack of sidewalks makes it dangerous to get there from the school. Current space is not conducive to all the recreation

department wants to do. In the summer, camp has to be canceled due to inclement weather as there is insufficient indoor space to accommodate all the children and activities. A building in close proximity to the schools would also allow for additional uses as they are always vying for space with the school. Enlarging the current space was not an option per the Director. There is possible land that can be used on the school property, but the Director felt that it was not in an ideal location at the back of the property off of Blake Road.

SAU 45

Superintendent Noyes stated that the schools have two beautiful buildings and have no real need for more. In terms of scheduling, the schools always get priority for space and she sees some difficult scheduling issues with recreation needs. It would be helpful for the schools to have a recreation building in close proximity and that larger recreation space will be used. She offered that it would be good to have space for administration and school board retreats and meetings. It would be nice to have another gym as there is a need right now and it would be used.

Ms. Noyes felt that there will be fewer students, but there will always be a need for core athletics and perhaps more cooperative programs which may require more facilities. When the Academy was built there were only 258 students and that was the reason only one gym was built at that time. Ms. Noyes indicated that there are fewer students than that today.

She discussed the entrance and egress to the school and the congestion at Blake Road. Creating another exit through the Taylor property would allow for a second method of access/exit.

In terms of the informal walkway through the Bank of NH, Ms. Noyes stated that there is no formal agreement with the property owners and that the district had no concerns with the use of that path.

Ms. Noyes mentioned the school does have need for additional parking. She also felt that a park or open space would also be desirable, but the school does not have any specific needs at the moment for additional property or buildings.

Town Administrator

Carter Terenzini discussed four potential uses for the property which he had recently presented to the CIPC:

- 2ND egress for the Academy
- If the school can't formalize use of the path through the Bank of NH property, then the Adele Taylor property would be an alternative
- The Blue Ribbon Commission recommended a gym on or adjacent to the school property
- The Village Charrette- and what if anything the community wants to do with the village. That basic underlying question was posed to the Planning Board and is now posed to the Select board; what is the community's attitude toward the village?

The Town has no use for the building itself as it currently exists and not in its current location or current condition.

Moultonborough Police Department

Police Chief Wetherbee stated that the MPD had no need of the building or property. He was asked about traffic safety with a second access /egress to the school property. He stated that security is currently working well at the schools with a driveway exit to a public way into a school safety zone. The current set up works fine and is a safe and controlled area. The Chief will get information for the committee on whether school zones were dependent on curb cuts or location of buildings. The Chief stated that there no special police concerns about students using the current informal path over the Bank of NH.

Department of Public Works

DPW Director Scott Kinmond advised that his department has no needs for the property. If the property were a park he advised that there would be some normal mowing and snow removal and perhaps his program of getting contractors to adopt a spot and maintain the area could be used for this property if purchased by the town.

Moultonborough Fire Chief Bengtson

Chief Bengtson indicated that the MFD has no real use for the property as a department. He did state that if the town should purchase the property he would ask that they consider installing a cistern on the property as it would provide a central source of water for the village area. He had no other suggestions for property uses.

If an access road were to be built, he would be in favor and would see it as an improvement as there is only one way in and out today.

The Chief was asked about his thoughts about any other uses for the property and did not have any other suggestions for the committee.

He added that the estimated cost for a cistern similar to what was recently installed at Playground Drive is about \$50,000.

Property Trustee

The committee welcomed property trustee Richard Plaisted. He advised the committee that he first approached the Moultonborough School Board about the property and they determined they had no interest in it. He then approached the Board of Selectmen who had some interest in purchasing it and began negotiations. He could see the property used for a gym or park. He wanted the Town to have it and if not, then he will dispose of it and has interest from other parties. He is hoping the Town will find some use for it as the land is good. It's a big old house on main street. He mentioned that the proceeds would be given to the schools for a scholarship fund for town children. He felt that is what Adele (Taylor) would have wanted.

Committee Recommendations

The committee began the process of organizing the use catalog on December 5th. The supporting documents, public comments and public suggestions for possible uses were reviewed and four major themes of uses were evident: (listed in no particular order)

- **Access/Egress to School District Property**
- **Multi-Purpose Community Building**
- **Green Open Space with possible multi-use of property**
- **Reuse of Existing Buildings “ Commercial or Public”**

While there may be other themes or categories that could be interpreted from the information the committee gathered, it was felt that the majority generally fell under these four headings.

The committee would like to make it clear that the use list and themes that developed, were not prioritized in any manner and that all uses were captured and documented. All are an integral part of this report. Lastly, the property is well suited for combining any number of uses and it is not the intention of this study to suggest that there is only a single potential use for the property.

Rationale

Access/Egress to School District Property

The location of the Taylor property with 5+ acres is in the center of the village district with direct access to the School District property. The committee heard that this could allow for a number of possibilities to improve traffic flow and emergency access to the district property. It could provide a direct connection from Route 25 to the Academy. Access can be restricted by locked gate or it can be an open roadway. It can be used as an alternative path from Whittier Highway to the school as there is no formal agreement made with the Bank of NH path that some students currently utilize.

The School District had no specific concerns with the current one road (Blake Road) access and traffic congestion. Police Chief Wetherbee felt that from a MPD perspective, the current one way in and one way out was working well, but a second route in and out could increase safety. This was echoed by Fire Chief Bengtson as it would improve emergency access.

The Town Administrator stated that one possible use for the property was access and egress to the school property.

An additional access road is strongly supported by the conceptual design exercise in the Village Charrette report , Safe Routes to School Travel Plan and the 2008 Master Plan (Chapter 2 and Appendix C).

The committee makes no recommendation as to the specifics of a road or access way in terms of construction or location.

Multi-Purpose Community Building

The committee heard that the property is in an ideal location for a community building of some sort. We heard a wide variety of possible community uses for such a building. The Blue Ribbon Commission Report on Community Services and Facilities recommended ***“that the town pursue development of a facility that includes an indoor gymnasium, Recreation Department office, program and storage space that would be on existing school land or property adjacent to school facilities.”*** That sentiment was strongly relayed to the committee by the Recreation Department Director as she stressed the need for more space with a full size gym.

We also heard that there is a desire for a senior drop in center, a recreation center with a dedicated connection to the school, a Human Services space, a community center, not just a senior center, a “people” building with multi purposes and with many uses, a space for activities and large enough for voting and a community swimming pool. Additionally, we heard that the property is adjacent to the school so no sidewalks would be needed and that the building had a lot of rooms and could be used as a community center.

From the Town's perspective, we were told that there was no public use for the existing building(s) expressed by any of the department heads interviewed or the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator did state, as per his recent presentation to the CIPC, that a possible use for the property was for a gym/recreation center as stated in the Blue Ribbon Commission Report and supporting some of the concepts outlined in the Village Charrette. Additionally, the 2008 Master Plan (Appendix F) refers to development of a Community/Senior Center as well as additional gymnasium space.

The committee does not make any recommendations as to whether a new building should be built or that the current buildings be repurposed. Considerable study will be needed to determine the best course of action if this is an option that is ultimately chosen.

Green Open Space with Possible Multi-Use of Property

Many community members expressed a strong desire for a central town green space and saw the 5+ acre parcel as an opportunity to develop a park like space in the center of town. We heard comments such as creating a “Norman Rockwell” look in the center of the village or a town

farm- mini Sturbridge Village open to the public weekends and holidays. The property could also be used for walking trails and other recreational activities. Appendix C of the 2008 Master Plan refers to a “village green” and the Village Charrette report also references the use of green space to create a natural break in the heart of the village. We were also told that there is probably room on the property for parking which would still leave open lawn for some other uses. In terms of property maintenance, the Director of Public Works had no concerns about grounds upkeep and suggested that it could fit under his department's new program to ask for local landscape contractors to adopt a spot and maintain it. The Police Chief had no security concerns and felt that the community would expect adequate police presence.

The committee has no recommendation as to how large or small a park or green space would be or what facilities it might contain.

Reuse of Existing Buildings “Commercial or Public”

“Adaptive reuse” as a possible use for the property was discussed at length by the committee. It was agreed that reusing the existing buildings when at all possible, would be a positive for the village area and the community.

Maggie Steer of the NH Preservation Alliance told the committee that the term adaptive reuse was out of favor as it was too specific, so using the phrase “reuse existing buildings” broadens the possibilities. Cristina Ashjian provided the committee information on feasibility studies in terms of reuse of the building and a photo of the Tuftonboro Town Hall which is an example of a successful adaptive reuse. The committee heard that if the buildings are beyond saving, what new structures, stylistically sympathetic, like MVSBS, could be built there and what could they offer? A view was also expressed that any reuse of the building be undertaken by private funds and not at taxpayer expense.

There was considerable concern expressed by the public that if the town does not buy the property anything can happen there within the zoning ordinances. If the town does buy it, it can control what happens there and reusing that building could be made a requirement. We heard that property with frontage on Route 25 and abutting the school should be a no brainer for purchase.

We heard that the town should buy the property to match what the community plan is for the village. There were suggestions that the town buy the property and then lease it so that it could control how it would be developed and what the buildings looked like. The property has many commercial applications and there was a desire to see small shops, a restaurant, and a parking area in the rear. There was also discussion and input regarding the size of the property that would lend itself to multiple uses to include open space in addition to reuse of portions of the existing building. The property could also be subdivided.

The strongest voice we heard though had a common theme, which was related to revitalization of the village and maintaining its rural character. It was clear to the committee that many in the community believe this is a priority. The Village Charrette and the 2008 Master Plan clearly support that view and speak in more detail as to how to achieve that desire.

The committee has no recommendation as to the condition of the buildings and what any reuse would entail or whether the buildings can , could or should be renovated or removed. The issue of any environmental remediation or preservation was also outside the scope of the committee's charge.

Additional Committee Thoughts

There was discussion during the committee meetings about the possibility that the property had no public use. It was agreed to include the following statement to properly represent the comments and concerns that the committee heard: there may be no compelling need for the town to buy the property and therefore no public use for it.

Going Forward

The committee did its utmost to stay on course and within its charge in preparing this report and believe that it was successful in that endeavor. During this process however, we uncovered some issues which the committee believes should be brought to the Board of Selectmen's attention for their consideration:

- The land in the center of town, per Fire Chief Bengtson, would be an ideal location for a buried water cistern and would aid his department's ability to fight fires in the village. It has the added benefit to the community of reducing property insurance rates in the district.
- Cost for any of the suggested uses put forth was outside of the committee charge, but we heard a fair amount of concern about cost for those potential uses, and the committee feels it is appropriate to bring that to your attention as you decide how to go forward with this.
- We heard many ideas and suggestions about this property. We also heard a desire from the community to move slowly and cautiously in making any decisions about the use of the property. The committee believes this is just a starting point, and with so many possible uses for the property, it will be challenging to gain public consensus as to its final disposition. To that end, if the property is purchased by the town, the Selectmen may want to consider a feasibility study which would help identify what different options may be available for the property.

Attachments to the Report:

Attachment One: Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachment Two: Public Comments

Attachment Three: Emails/Letters

Attachment Four: Adele Taylor Property Use List

Attachment Five: Recreation Dept. History

Attachment Six: [Master Plan 2008](#) (Hyperlink)

Attachment Seven: [Blue Ribbon Commission Report](#) (Hyperlink)

Attachment Eight: [Moultonborough Zoning Ordinances- Table of Uses, Commercial Zone "C"](#) (Hyperlink)

Attachment Nine: [Environmental Report](#) (Hyperlink)